

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1. (Previously presented) An electric power steering device for transmitting rotation of a steering assisting electric motor to a steering mechanism through a small gear and a large gear, comprising:

a first member on a rotary shaft of said electric motor;

a second member at one end of the small gear; and

an elastic member between the first and second members for transmitting a torque between the two members;

wherein said elastic member has a first elastic modulus corresponding to a case, in which a torsion angle between the first and second members is less than a predetermined angle, and a second elastic modulus corresponding to another case, in which said torsion angle is one of equal to and larger than the predetermined angle, and wherein said first elastic modulus is smaller than said second elastic modulus.

Claim 2. (Previously presented) The electric power steering device according to Claim 1,

wherein said first and second members comprise protrusions for meshing in a torque transmittable manner while clamping the elastic member in a rotational direction of the rotary shaft,

wherein the corresponding protrusions of the first and second members comprise clamping faces acting as torque transmission faces capable of clamping the elastic member in-between, and

wherein at least one of said clamping faces and a clamped face as the torque

transmission faces of the elastic member confronting the clamping faces comprise projections for establishing the first elastic modulus by compressing the elastic member locally when said torsion angle is less than the predetermined angle.

Claim 3. (Previously presented) The electric power steering device according to Claim 1,

wherein said first and second members comprise a plurality of projections for meshing in a torque transmittable manner while clamping the elastic member in a rotating direction of the rotary shaft,

wherein said elastic member comprises a bifurcated structure defining a cavity portion, and

wherein the elastic member is compressed to collapse the cavity portion substantially when said torsion angle is one of equal to and larger than the predetermined angle.

Claim 4. (Previously presented) A joint for use in an electric power steering device, comprising:

a first member;

a second member; and

an elastic member between the first and second members for transmitting a torque between the two members;

wherein said elastic member has a first elastic modulus corresponding to a case, in which a torsion angle between the first and second members is less than a predetermined angle, and a second elastic modulus corresponding to another case, in which said torsion

angle is one of equal to and larger than the predetermined angle, and wherein said first elastic modulus is smaller than said second elastic modulus.

Claim 5. (Previously presented) A joint for use in an electric power steering device for transmitting rotation of a steering assisting electric motor to a steering mechanism through a small gear and a large gear, said joint comprising:

a first member;

a second member; and

an elastic member between the first and second members for transmitting a torque between the two members;

wherein said elastic member has a first elastic modulus corresponding to a case, in which a torsion angle between the first and second members is less than a predetermined angle, and a second elastic modulus corresponding to another case, in which said torsion angle is one of equal to and larger than the predetermined angle, and wherein said first elastic modulus is smaller than said second elastic modulus.

Claim 6. (Previously presented) A joint for use in an electric power steering device, comprising:

a first member;

a second member; and

an elastic member between the first and second members for transmitting a torque between the two members;

wherein said elastic member has a first elastic modulus corresponding to a case, in

which a torsion angle between the first and second members is less than a predetermined angle, and a second elastic modulus corresponding to another case, in which said torsion angle is one of equal to and larger than the predetermined angle, and wherein said first elastic modulus is smaller than said second elastic modulus.

Claim 7. (Previously presented) A joint for use in an electric power steering device, comprising:

a first member;

a second member; and

an elastic member between the first and second members for transmitting a torque between the two members;

wherein said elastic member has a first elastic modulus corresponding to a case, in which a torsion angle between the first and second members is less than a predetermined angle, and a second elastic modulus corresponding to another case, in which said torsion angle is one of equal to and larger than the predetermined angle, and wherein said first elastic modulus is smaller than said second elastic modulus.

Claim 8. (Currently amended) An electric power steering device comprising:

a first member comprising a rotary shaft of an electric motor;

a second member comprising a gear of a steering mechanism; and

an elastic member between the first member and the second member and having at least a two-stage torsional elastic modulus,

wherein said two-stage torsional elastic modulus comprises a first elastic modulus

corresponding to a first range of torsion angles and a second elastic modulus corresponding to a second range of torsion angles.

Claim 9. (Currently amended) The device of claim 8, wherein said ~~at least two-stage torsional elastic modulus has a first elastic modulus corresponds to an~~ when the angle between the first and second members ~~that is~~ less than a predetermined angle and ~~said a~~ second elastic modulus ~~that~~ is larger than the first elastic modulus when the angle between the first and second members is one of equal to and larger than the predetermined angle.

Claim 10. (Previously presented) The device of claim 9, wherein said elastic member comprises a foam portion having said first elastic modulus.

Claim 11. (Previously presented) The device of claim 9, wherein said elastic member comprises a first layer having said first elastic modulus and a second layer having said second elastic modulus.

Claim 12. (Previously presented) The device of claim 11, wherein said first and second layers extend radially outward from a body portion of said elastic member.

Claim 13. (Previously presented) The device of claim 11, wherein said first layer comprises two first layers that sandwich said second layer.

Claim 14. (Previously presented) The device of claim 8, wherein each of said first

member and said second member comprises a protrusion.

Claim 15. (Previously presented) The device of claim 8, wherein said elastic member comprises:

a body portion; and

a plurality of plate-shaped clamped portions radially extending from said body portion.

Claim 16. (Previously presented) The device of claim 15, wherein said elastic member further comprises a projection circumferentially extending from at least one of said plurality of plate-shaped clamped portions.